

the ACTION reporter

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

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ACTION DALLAS CLINIC HAS DELEGATES FROM 83 SOUTHWEST CITIES

From 83 cities in 18 states came representatives to ACTION's Sixth Regional Urban Renewal Clinic in Dallas, Texas, to make the clinic what one observer called "the biggest and the best" held to date.

More than 400 state and local urban renewal leaders took part in ten give-and-take workshop meetings May 5-6 with some 30 national experts in the field on hand to give practical advice.

Major areas of discussion were: How to "tool-up" for local urban renewal projects and how to finance and expedite the work once it has been started.

Co-sponsor of the meeting was the Greater Dallas Planning Council of which Granville Moore is vice president and general manager.

Eight prints of the "Man of ACTION" film were awarded as prizes to cities represented by the largest delegation. Winners were Glendale, Texas; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Denver, Colorado; No. Little Rock, Arkansas; Kansas City, Missouri; Wichita, Kansas; and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Hagerstown Digs Into Survey: Eighth City to Use Evaluator

Hagerstown, Md.—Twenty-five civic leaders in this city, armed with the ACTION Evaluator as their key tool, have launched an intensive fact-finding project to determine the "climate" in their community for economic development.

They are members of the Hagerstown Urban Renewal Committee appointed by Mayor Winslow Barbours to look into all aspects of urban renewal which affect the local business scene. Richard Grumbacher, vice-president of Tyerly's Department Store, is chairman of the committee which held an orientation session with ACTION staff members late last month.

Mr. Grumbacher has expressed the hope that the Evaluator study will result in widespread citizen understanding and activity on the urban renewal front. Attempts to get such understanding and action have been made several times within the past five years in Hagerstown.

The 28-page copyrighted ACTION Evaluator guide includes sources of aid and other data on urban renewal and features checklists and a method for scoring good and bad points in a town.

The Hagerstown Urban Renewal Com-

mittee, which will seek answers to hundreds of questions about the community, has been assured full official cooperation. The Mayor has already sent letters to all city department heads calling for their full cooperation with the Evaluator team.

Hagerstown is the latest city of eight to undertake the Evaluator study.

For information on how your city can undertake ACTION's do-it-yourself evaluation, write to Leo Molinaro, ACTION's educational program director, 2 West 46th Street, New York, N.Y.

The ACTION Reporter is going to college next month. The June issue will feature a report on the ways in which several universities across the nation are taking part in urban renewal work. If your local university or college has a program touching on renewal, ACTION Reporter would like to hear about it.



BANQUET SESSION OF DALLAS CLINIC. . . . The more than 400 delegates to ACTION's Sixth Regional Urban Renewal Clinic held in Dallas May 5-6 are shown here at the Monday-night banquet at which a major address was delivered by James W. Rotne, a member of ACTION's board of directors and president of James W. Rotne and Company. The delegates had taken part that day in ten stimulating workshop sessions. The next day: more of the same.

Buffalo Citizens Restore an Old Neighborhood



RACE TO SAVE A NEIGHBORHOOD is set off by Mayor Sedita of Buffalo. The four young racers represent Buffalo's Board of Redevelopment, the Fruit Belt Boosters, Junior Chamber of Commerce and Buffalo Action Committee for Home Improvement (BACH). Adults in the picture are (left to right) Redevelopment Board member Matthew Okoniewski,

Mayor Sedita, Charles Horan, regional director of the Urban Renewal Administration; Mrs. Bernard G. King, chairman of the Redevelopment Board; Councilman Cora P. Maloney; George F. Rand, Jr., president of the Redevelopment Foundation, and Dexter P. Ramsey, BACH chairman. The trailer in the left background is a mobile information center.

Buffalo, New York—A 40-block area in one of Buffalo's older sections—dubbed the "Fruit Belt" because of such street names as Peach, Orange, Cherry and Lemon—is right now the center of urban renewal attraction.

A full-scale neighborhood improvement program—the city's first—is under way and Buffalo hopes that by active citizen participation and strict housing code enforcement, it can revitalize the old neighborhood. The Fruit Belt is sandwiched between two neighborhoods slated for redevelopment.

The rehabilitation program was introduced via an intensive public relations and advertising program sponsored by the Buffalo Action Committee for Home Improvement (BACH). **ACTION Group Correspondent Richard D. McCarthy** is public relations chairman and **Dexter P. Ramsey**, Buffalo banker, is BACH chairman. This group is an autonomous subcommittee of the Buffalo Redevelopment Foundation which several months ago sponsored a local clinic on urban renewal.

Accent on Information

This is how the rehabilitation program got under way and how it works.

BACH blanketed the Fruit Belt with literature alerting some 3,000 residents of the coming program, obtained free TV and radio time and placed news releases in local papers. Mayor Frank A. Sedita, at the committee's request, gave full coverage to the project in his first TV report to the people.

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ST. LOUIS MAPS OUT 16 NEIGHBORHOODS TO FOSTER RESIDENT IDENTIFICATION

St. Louis, Missouri—City planners here are dividing St. Louis into 16 homogeneous residential areas in order to enlist neighborhood spirit in the campaign against blight.

Sixteen residential "towns" have been mapped out, each with its own community facilities and services. They were set up with special regard to schools, parks, street widenings, new highways and city plans.

And, according to Arthur F. Schwarz, chairman of the City Plan Commission, indications are that already citizens' pride in their neighborhoods has been reawakened. One section—West End—now has an organized neighborhood group which is sponsored by property owners and merchants.

This resident-identification is an integral part of Mr. Schwarz's city-renewal philosophy. He points out that no matter how many impressive plans are on the

(Continued on page 4)

ORGANIZATIONS IN RENEWAL

Below is a statement by a national organization whose activities bear on urban renewal. The group's programs, aims and resources available to local groups working for neighborhood and community improvement are listed.

The Department of the Urban Church is one of several departments lodged in the Division of Home Missions of the **National Council of Churches of Christ** which are set up to serve the member denominations of Protestant and Orthodox churches. These denominations support the National Council and a number of state and local Councils of Churches as well.

It is primarily at the local level that the interests of the churches are brought to bear upon the processes of urban renewal. Here the churches have a dual concern: an understanding of the migrations and displacements of people through urban renewal is vital to church planning and, more importantly, the churches are concerned that out of urban rebuilding will emerge a new city wherein the dignity of the individual is preserved and a responsible society is nurtured.

Five times a year the department publishes a magazine, **THE CITY CHURCH**, which contains articles by planners, pastors, builders and theologians. Other publications are **Church and City Planning**, 36 pages, 50¢, and **The Church and Urban Development**, 35¢. A bibliography of materials available will be mailed on request.

Through the Department of the Urban Church, the Council helps establish communications between local Councils of Churches and local planners and renewal administrators. Some members of the department are also members of the Church Planning Committee of the American Institute of Planners.

The Council recommends that local groups concerned with urban renewal contact their local Council of Churches and also invite direct inquiries. **For more information on publications, write to the Office of Publications and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 129 East 23rd Street, New York 10, New York.** For information on other facets of the Department of Urban Church work write directly to the department, **National Council of Churches, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York.**

(NOTE: The department is now in the process of mailing out 2,000 City Church Study Kits to pastors across the nation on the subject "The Church's Stake in Urban Renewal." Included in this kit are two pieces of ACTION literature, **Time for Action** and **You and Your Neighborhood**. Single kits are 60¢ and may be obtained from the National Council's Office of Publications and Distribution.)

CITIZENS IN action

The Allegheny Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods-Housing Inc. (ACTION-Housing Inc.)—formed only ten months ago to coordinate urban renewal efforts in that Pennsylvania county—has already taken one giant step toward its overall goal of eliminating blight in the area.

It is sponsoring a new rental housing project known as Spring Hill Gardens under Section 221 of the National Housing Act, with the mortgage fully insured by the Federal Housing Administration. The mortgage is a 40-year, 100%, covering the \$1,776,500 cost. Ground for the project was broken in March and initial occupancy is set for early 1959.

The 209-unit development is located in Pittsburgh's North Side and is the first Section 221 rental housing project in that city or state and the second in the nation to get an FHA commitment. (In order for rental housing to qualify for this special FHA mortgage insurance for relocation homes, the sponsoring group must be a non-profit organization.)

Displaced Get Preference

With 19 buildings of 11 apartments each, the project will give first preference for a 60-day period to families displaced from their homes by urban renewal activities. Relocating these displaced persons is seen by the broadly-representative civic group as one of its most important contributions.

De. Charles B. Nutting, president, put it this way: "Without this housing, our renewal, our Renaissance, will slowly grind to a halt."

(The Housing Authority of Pittsburgh is at work finding new homes for families

displaced by the Lower Hill Redevelopment Project, a project adjacent to Pittsburgh's fabulous "Golden Triangle" which is one of the most compact business sections in the country and which boasts 50 new buildings.)

By sponsoring the new Spring Hill Gardens rental housing project and by setting up a planned housing information and counseling service, ACTION-Housing Inc. hopes to keep relocation-on-a-grand-scale running smoothly.

Study Shows Need

The group was born out of the realization that housing would play a vital role in the Renaissance. A study was made by the Pennsylvania Economy League (Western Division) of housing needs and agencies concerned with those needs. It showed that renewal activities were not keeping pace with the rate of deterioration (in Pittsburgh, "blighted" housing had been demolished at a rate of only one-tenth of one percent annually, while studies showed shacks tend to spread at the rate of one percent annually) and that no single existing agency was geared to take the needed approach to the problem. The League recommended that a voluntary non-profit citizens' organization be established. ACTION-Housing Inc. was set up in August, 1957.

Since that time it has insisted in coordinating the activities of existing groups and agencies working to eliminate blight

in the county, and has helped develop county-wide planning. It helps organize citizens groups and takes positive action to bring about the rehabilitation of existing housing and the construction of new housing for middle-income families.

Round Table on Housing

To explore the possibility of stimulating the production of more rental housing in the Pittsburgh area, it joined with *Home & Home Magazine* and the *American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods* in sponsoring a January Round Table on "What Must Be Done to Make Moderate Rental Housing Work in a Typical City Like Pittsburgh?" More than 50 top level national and local leaders in allied fields took part in the unique conference.

President Hayward V. McIntosh of the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh called it "the finest thing that could have happened in Pittsburgh."

Starting with that meeting, the group has sponsored a continuing series of public meetings on various solutions to the problems of providing more housing in the area. And more meetings are planned on these subjects—cooperative housing, housing in the economy and citizen participation.

The group is also spearheading local efforts to install on an annual basis a Real Property Inventory in Allegheny County. It is cooperating with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and about 50 business groups as well as civic and governmental bodies.

Says Bernard E. Loshbough, executive director: "ACTION-Housing Inc. considers these and other program activities as the seed of the residential Renaissance in the Pittsburgh area."

For more information on these activities, write to Bernard E. Loshbough, executive director, ACTION-Housing Inc., No. 1 Gateway Center, Pittsburgh 22, Pennsylvania.

Baltimore's Downtown

The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc., has put out a handsome 50-page presentation of a plan in downtown revitalization titled "Charles Center."

Baltimore is the first city in the nation to designate its entire downtown as an urban renewal area and this presentation shows in detail how the all-important first step would be taken.

Two ACTION members are residents of Baltimore—Chairman Guy T. O. Holaday of the ACTION educational program, and James W. Roese, member ACTION's board of directors.

(Available from The Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc., 10 Light Street, Baltimore 2, Md., for \$7 per copy.)



YOU

could be robbed today. Right anywhere in your community is a dangerous neighborhood. Neighborhood crime may steal your family's security by knocking crimes, disease, shams. Right can divide property values, educational opportunities. Stay alert, keep up your own home, tell your neighbors. In community improvement groups. Start now. In writings.

OACTION

ADVERTISING FOR ACTION. . . . This is the new car card for the ACTION advertising campaign which is conducted for ACTION by The Advertising Council. The card was prepared by the volunteer advertising agency, Young & Rubicam. Space for the car cards is donated by the transportation advertising industry. Why not put this card to work in your town? Check with your local public transit company.

BUFFALO—from page 2

The Fruit Belt "Boosters" were organized and held meetings at which city officials and BACH members told the facts about the program. Most of the 40 blocks in the area now have block organizations.

The project got its official kick-off at a novel ceremony. (See photo above.) Thousands of copies of ACTION's booklet *You and Your Neighborhood* were distributed. Fruit Belt Boosters have now gone into action, encouraging their neighbors to get busy with brooms, tools and paint brushes.

Through work on the part of BACH's home improvement loan committee, local banks have pledged full support and have already made more home improvement loans than would have been made under ordinary circumstances.

Mobile Information

Buildings and remodeling contractors have set up headquarters in the Buffalo Junior Chamber of Commerce mobile information center located in the Fruit Belt, and BACH is now planning a home-improvement contest. Thus far, only three cases of residents refusing to admit the city's housing code inspectors have been reported. The more usual story is of the resident who admits the inspectors, goes to City Hall to discuss violations and then gets busy on repairs. (Inspectors revisit homes after the specified time has elapsed.)

For more information on BACH's and the city's program, write to R. D. McCarthy, Buffalo Redevelopment Foundation, National Gypsum Company, Buffalo 2, New York.



Some excellent informational brochures put out by the Mayor's Advisory Council on Urban Renewal are "perking up" Portland, Oregon, citizens to the importance of urban renewal. One Question and Answer brochure is titled "Let's Perk Up Portland with Urban Renewal" and answers such questions as: How much will I have to invest in renewal? A. Less than \$2 a year for the owner of a \$10,000 property. Another brochure, "Project No. 1," describes how Portland's old residential district on the waterfront can be rehabilitated. "Take Pride in Your Neighborhood" tells how neighbors can join together in renewal efforts. "Let's Perk Up Portland to Make More Jobs" points out that in one area alone redevelopment will make jobs directly or indirectly for 10,000 people. For single copies and more information on these, write to John B. Kenward, Director, Urban Renewal, Mayor's Advisory Council on Urban Renewal, 2234 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Portland 1, Oregon.

ST. LOUIS—from page 2

drawing boards, or how many appeals are made to save the city from blight, in the end, saving the city is up to the people who live in it.

The new divisions, he explains, are like 16 "towns" within the framework of the city and range in size from 40,000 to 80,000 in population. Each section is slated to get its own name so that residents of the area will be identified closely with it. The basis of the community design has been the high school, and each area also has its own park and shopping center.

Indicative of the active interest St. Louis residents are taking in their city is the fact that 1,570 of them turned out Feb. 11 (in near-zero weather) for a Board of Aldermen hearing. They were there to protest amendments to the Modern Rooming House Ordinance—amendments which, it was said, would have legalized "bootleg" rooming houses operating in violation of rooming house building and zoning laws. The Aldermen killed the amendments.

To Mr. Schwarz, the Board of Aldermen hearing was "... the most heartening display of community morale in St. Louis in recent years."

For more information on this and the 16-area plan, write to Mr. Arthur F. Schwarz, chairman, City Plan Commission, Civil Courts Building, St. Louis 1, Missouri.

ACTION Director Hailed

Mayor DeLevesque S. Morrison of New Orleans has been named Mayor of the Year for 1957 by the Louisiana Municipal Association. He is a member of ACTION's educational program committee.

ACTION

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